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State to fund information assurance center at Griffiss

by **Fran Crumb, Information Directorate**

ROME, N.Y. — New York State officials have announced \$4.5 million in funding to establish a research/training center to facilitate partnerships between academia, government and the private sector in the fields of information assurance and cybersecurity. The Griffiss Institute for Information Assurance is expected to begin operating within a year in the former Flight Simulator Building at Griffiss Business and Technology Park.

The Air Force Research Laboratory's Information Directorate is viewed as an anchor attraction for the new institute, due to its extensive involvement in information assurance research and development; however, there is no direct financial arrangement between the parties.

"The Griffiss Institute will build upon technologies under development at the Air Force Research Laboratory," said Raymond P. Urtz, director of the Information Directorate. "By partnering the laboratory with private industry and academia, the institute will be a recognized leader in this technology."

"The institute is a not-for profit corporation that sits outside the laboratory as a consortium of multiple universities, multiple businesses both small and large, and state and federal government," explained Dr. Thomas Triscari Jr., associate professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Lally School of Management and Technology. He also serves as a research scientist at the Information Directorate under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA).

"With the directorate located at Griffiss Park and operating as the DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) agent for a significant amount of research in the area of information assurance — as well as having an organic reservoir of technical expertise — we were looked at as an anchor for this project," said Triscari. "Students from the high school level through community colleges and large research universities conduct research at, and with, the laboratory. Locating the

Griffiss Institute here will allow an even stronger degree of collaboration."

Triscari added that, "Information assurance is such a challenging problem, with so many aspects to it, that no one business or university has all the assets to come up with solutions to the problems. With the robust talent pool being brought together at the institute, a critical mass will be formed. Some of the resulting research and products, as well as the intellectual capital, will spur new companies and expand existing companies in the Mohawk Valley, so there is also an economic development objective behind this effort."

Less than two months ago, the National Science Foundation announced a \$199,000 NSF "cyber corps" grant to Utica College. The college will partner with the Information Directorate, as well as Syracuse University, the State University of New York (SUNY) Institute of Technology at Utica/Rome, and Mohawk Valley and Herkimer County community colleges to establish an educational program in the emerging fields of cyber security and information assurance.

The NSF grant will create programs for associate's, bachelor's and advanced degrees in the information assurance field, expanding on an existing computer forensics program at Utica College. Students participating in the program will serve as interns at the AFRL Rome Research Site and several high technology firms in the area.

Legislation already approved by the U.S. House of Representatives would also create national centers in information assurance that encourage collaboration between private companies, academia and federal laboratories. The CyberSecurity Act authorizes \$880 million over five years to create new cybersecurity research centers, undergraduate program grants, community college grants and fellowships to ensure that the nation is better prepared to prevent and combat terrorist attacks on private and government computers. @